

9. Men, Women & Money

OBJECTIVE: Help participants become aware of differences between the genders in their approaches to money.

TIME: 20 minutes

MATERIALS:

Men, Women, and Money Handout

TALKING POINTS:

We often hear, “Men are this way, and women are that way.” Stereotypes about men and women exist across many issues, including money.

ACTIVITY:

Ask the class to brainstorm on some of the things we say about the differences between women and men when it comes to money. Lead a lively brainstorm on this question, writing down ideas on a flipchart.

Then say, “But what’s true and what’s the hype in what we’ve said? Are there proven differences between how men and women think about and handle money?”

Research shows that there are some differences in how men and women tend to approach money. However, it’s important to note that when researchers talk about differences between groups of people like “men” and “women,” they are talking averages. They’re talking about differences that tend to be true for many people, but there will be many exceptions. You may or may not behave or think like many people of your gender. There are far more differences between individuals in how they think and act than can be explained by just knowing the sex of the individual. Nevertheless, while there are differences **within** each gender, there are real differences **between** the genders as well. For example, research has shown that in America:

- Women tend to shop more than men.
- Men seem to be less willing to seek professional advice regarding finances than women.
- Women tend to teach their sons more about money than they teach their daughters.
- Men tend to earn more money than women.
- Women save less of their income than men.
- Men are somewhat more interested in taking financial risks than women.

Distribute the handout, and ask the men to gather into one group and the women into another (split groups if they have

more than 4 or 5 people). Ask each group to select someone to be the “reporter” and to write down the group’s responses. Ask the groups to discuss each general statement, using the following questions:

- How does reading this statement make you feel?
- Does the statement surprise you? Do you think it is true?
- In which cases are you and your partner similar to “the average” and in which cases are you and your partner different?
- How have the differences between you been a source of difficulties?
- How have they been an advantage?

End this activity with group reporting and further discussion. Be sure that differences are validated and that the advantages of differences are brought out. End on a positive note.